

## [Country Editor]

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by

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Editing and managing a country newspaper, though it be only an eight-page weekly, is normally a grown man's job. Its editor occupies a position much like that of the late President Arthur J. Roberts, of Colby College, at the time he taught English there, with a potpourri of other subjects.

"Just what chair do you occupy at Colby, Professor? " a brother professor from another college once asked him.

"Chair! chair!", came back Roberts, "I don't occupy any chair; I fill a whole settee."

So with the country editor. He has no staff on which he may lean or with which he may share the editorial work. He may be business manager, reporter, even typesetter, for his paper; he may serve a dozen different functions, support the whole weight of his paper.

"When that weight settles on the shoulders of a young girl just out of school--slight and slim young shoulders, even slighter and slimmer in her own self-estimation--it might be expected to exert a crushing force.

"It would have, too," said Miss Mary D. Musgrove, editor of the Bristol, N.H., Enterprise," If I had not been endowed by my father and mother with rugged health and a cast-iron / constitution. They made it possible for me to carry through, and through their training I had learned never to say 'die', but simply to do my best under any conditions.

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"My father served in the War of Secession, and on the western frontier. In May, 1866, he was mustered out, with the rank of captain, and with the seeds of future ill health planted in him by those years of service. In 1878 he established the weekly newspaper now known as the Bristol Enterprise.

"All the family helped him with the mechanical work in the office. Even when we children--there were, eventually, six of us---were pretty small our hands could fold circulars and do other simple work of the office. We used to gather around the home dining room table in the evening--two or three or all of us--to fold and place in envelopes many hundreds of articles for mailing or other delivery.

"We were happy; father made it as much play as work for us. Our group was congenial, and though we always welcomed other children into our family circle, we didn't depend on them for our enjoyment; we were sufficient unto ourselves.

"Then, as we grew older, each of us had a period of helping in the office. Father paid us for our work and we saved it toward our later school expenses.

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"Wonderful training that was, in earning and saving. We learned to appreciate the value of money, and its equivalent in labor. It probably, cost father no more than to have paid our school expenses later out of his pocket, but it trained us in the dignity of work, and in being provident for the future.

"So, when ill health came upon my father, at the time when I was graduated from New Hampton Institute, and he needed another shoulder beside him under the load, I was not entirely a raw recruit. I had, in common with my brothers and sisters, a familiarity with the mechanical routine of the office.

"But that load of responsibility, which began then to slip on to my shoulders, was something new, something which staggered me then, as the growing possibilities of a

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country newspaper have ever since. But I seemed to be the one of the family to do this work, and I went at it with the best that was in me.

"One whole winter father was away from the office entirely and my younger brother and myself carried on; Eugene took care of the newsgathering, and I took charge of the business end. Even at the times when father could be in the office, there were many problems coming up from the annoyance of which [?] must be spared as much as possible--many things which I must settle for myself from the very start.

"My whole outlook had to undergo / revision. All my school life I had looked forward to being a teacher. I planned to take kindergarten training. But now that way seemed to be closing before me and no other way than this opening. I was led along, 4 from one month to another, by the present necessities, into newspaper work. Maybe I have become a teacher of a sort; they say a newspaper office is a poor man's college, you know.

"There is one thing, though, which has been a great consolation to me through later years. It has been my privilege to educate my two pieces for the very same work, and at the very same school, which I had chosen for myself--kindergarten teaching; so, vicariously they will do for me the work I had set my heart on. I do believe in a Providence that shapes our ends.

"Settling the problems of a printing office have probably been very different from what composing the difficulties of a kindergarten would have been.

"It was not easy for the men in the office to take instructions from a girl--nor agreeable. Many and many a time did I wish most fervently that I was a man forty years old; it seemed to me that a personage of that sort would help me over many a rough spot. I have found that workmen did not like to take instructions from a woman; perhaps they become tired of that very thing at home.

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"I have always maintained that, in newspaper work, a woman meets with more difficulties than a man, not only as far as the office itself is concerned, but in the work of dealings with the public as well.

"Almost immediately after I had assumed the sole charge of the business, upon my father's death, people began to come to me for loans of money; they tried to get me to sign notes; they seemed to consider me an 'easy mark'. Not infrequently someone outside the office thought it a favorable time to make use of me and of my paper to further his own political schemes, or other interests. And as the years went by I often wondered if the business men of the town would have done just the things they did, had the editor of the Enterprise been a man--would he ever have met such situations at all.

"We had an outbreak of scarlet fever in town which threatened to become epidemic. Prominent tradespeople rose in arms against me for the mention of it which had come out in my paper.

"'People won't come into Bristol to trade, if you keep on talking about it,' they objected, 'it will hurt business.'

"They even went so far as to threaten a boycott of the paper -- withdrawal of their advertising, etc., if I said anything more about it. Fortunately, for me at least, there were no fresh cases after that, so the affair settled itself. But you don't notice there any special delicacy toward me, as a woman, do you?

"I was the first, and for some years the only, woman editor in the state to carry the full responsibility of a newspaper office. There are three others now--Miss Addle M. Towne, of the Franklin Journal-Transcript, receiving the paper from her father, Judge O.A. Towne; Mrs. Charlotte Lance, of the Meredith News, who took over the paper on the death of her husband; and Miss Suzanne Loiseaux of the Plymouth Record.

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"But on the whole, however, I have only appreciation for the support of my employees and the citizens through the years in which I have been in charge of the paper.

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"Inside the office problems occasionally arose which a man would probably never have met. In the case of hiring one foreman, years ago, I am positively sure the problem presented me for solution, would never have been offered a man.

"In answer to my advertisement for a foreman several candidates appeared. One came in on the train, walked up to Central Square, looked about him a few minutes with growing disgust, walked back to the station, and went out on the next train without honoring me by so much as a look-in.

"But another of these candidates made up for all the slights, intended or otherwise, of the rest. Yes, he wanted to stay, as / much as the other wanted to go. He insisted on staying, my wish in the matter notwithstanding. No-no, money was no object -- he'd stay for his mere living expenses. Sleep? He'd sleep anywhere--on the bed of the press, on the feedboard, in the waste paper--anywhere, so long as he might have the job. Perhaps, he suggested, there might be a spare corner in my own home where a mattress could be spread for him on the floor.

"He covered so much ground in his fervent application --progressed so rapidly--that in an hour's time he got to the point of proposing a business partnership with me. In order to bring this about in the most permanent and inclusive manner, he proposed a union of domestic as well as business interests.

"No. I assured him emphatically, he wouldn't fit the job. Finally, I got rid of him, but didn't convince him of my entire lack of interest. Soon afterward I received his picture and a long, bewildering letter, telling of his still undashed hopes and continuing courage. The

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picture was enough to kill any incipient leanings even if one had never interviewed the original, personally.

"It has been strictly business--not pleasure, I assure you --which has taken me to many places. It was embarrassing to be the only woman attending the Board of Trade meetings, and the gatherings of the New Hampshire Weekly Publishers' Association, held annually in Boston. It didn't relieve my sensitivity much, regarding the situation, when one of my young salesmen inferred that it wasn't entirely proper for me to attend the Association's meetings.

"However, in those years when I was first carrying the whole responsibility of the office, after my father's death, I felt that I imperatively needed every mite of help I could glean from every possible source.

"New, changing conditions arising from the World War, and succeeding one another with confusing rapidity, difficult for even an experienced editor to meet, demanded new measures. There were new labor conditions and new competition. I found it was impossible to figure costs and selling prices by the methods I had learned with my father. It was necessary to give considerable study to such things, to keep afloat.

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"In these trying years I owed much to Judge Towne, of the Franklin Journal-Transcript. He had been a close friend of my father, and he gave me liberally of his counsel.

"During my father's long period of ill health, the machinery of the printing office had become more and more obsolescent. The times called for new, modern machinery. Friendly business advisors counselled me to sell the plant; they said I had a white elephant on my hands. But the months went by and no purchaser appeared. Month after month I wofully scanned the accounts--no relief. Carried forward by such tide of affairs--to sink or swim--surely I needed new energy from whatever source it might be had to keep afloat.

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"I found it in the meetings of the Association, and I braved all the impropriety that might lurk in my attendance there to get it. Judge Towne again came to my support; he encouraged me to keep coming, and I attended every meeting, religiously. And in all those years, notwithstanding being a woman innovation, I experienced nothing but the most courteous treatment from the members of the Association.

"I was, though, the innocent cause of one bit of perplexity to the Association--all because I am a woman. It occasioned some embarrassment all around, but furnished enough merriment to make up for it, I guess.

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"That year, the Publishers' Association committee arranged to hold their annual meeting at the Boston City Club. They completely forgot two facts: that the Association included a woman, and that a cast iron rule of the Club forbade entrance to a woman above the first floor. They remembered it when it was too late and the arrangements had all been made.

"What to do?

"The committee went to the City Club management. Would they, just this once, please, under the circumstances, admit a woman? No, sirs, they would not! Their rules were of long standing, and rules were rules, whether of the Medes and Persians or of the Boston City Club. No woman ever had been admitted to the sacred precincts above the first floor, and no woman ever would be. And that was that.

"Vainly our committee pleaded and stormed. They even threatened to change their arrangements and go to a hotel. At long last, on the representation that I was an important reporter, permission was given for me to go up to the meeting.

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"All this I knew nothing about until I arrived at the guarded entrance of the Club. There one of the older salesmen, with whom I had been acquainted for a number of years, was waiting waiting to take me in charge, and assist me to gain entrance to the room above.

"Several times we were stopped by a guard, but, rather to his bewilderment, I surmise, my companion escorted me right past him, chins up and no explanations.

"Personally, I was not much elated over the affair but the 10 Association laughed over it for a long time; they haven't entirely forgotten it yet.

"That's all about being a woman. Now about being an editor.

"This differs from other lines of business in that an editor alone makes mistakes--at least one might infer that from the ado made over his slips when they do occur. His errors are published to the whole country round; other businesses have the privilege of more or less privacy in that respect. And a little mistake made by an editor often carries great significance with it.

"'I want to see the one who set that ad. I had put in the paper, yesterday.' burst in a subscriber, grimly.

"'Why? What's wrong with it?' I temporized, for the woman was very definitely angry.

"'Whoever set that ad. made it look ridiculous...and he did it on purpose, too; I know he did.'

"'Oh, I don't think so.' I soothed; 'but if anything is wrong with it I'll make it right...if you'll tell me what it is.'

"'No, I want to see him. The one who set that ad. has a grudge against me...or else he is a fool, one or the other. I want to see him.'



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"I knew that if she was allowed to have it out with him, personally, it might lead to recriminations which would take a long time to die down. Country people are fond of twitting one another about the sins of their grandfathers. I just couldn't let her deal with my help.

"I can't tell you,' I finally said; ' if you'll tell me about it, and if it warrants any actions on my part I'll attend to it.

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Otherwise '

"But that wouldn't do. She flounced out of the office, unsatisfied, her secret with her, intact.

"Mistakes are more serious in a country weekly than in a big daily because of the thoroughness with which the country paper is read. It goes home, lies conveniently on the sitting room table throughout the week, is read, reread, read again by every member of the family who can read, is considered, digested, even to its most humble, inconspicuous two-line advertisements. The slightest error has a poor chance of escaping detection under that scrutiny.

"It is a serious matter for an editor to jump at conclusions; one must get at the bottom of things before passing judgment and putting them into print. What may begin as a small controversy in country towns ends by involving the feelings of a large part of the population. We had such a discussion over a schoolhouse once. Opinions on both sides were strong and feelings ran high. It would have been an easy matter for an editor to express some ill-considered opinion which would have added much to the bitterness of the dispute. I spent a great deal of time getting to the bottom of it, talking with both sides, getting facts in the case, before dealing with it in my paper.

"Partiality, even a bias of which the editor may be hardly conscious, unless he meditates on it, is another serious thing for a country paper. To say nothing of the ease with which

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an editor may fall into a savage libel suit, the people for whom a country editor prints his paper are so delicately sensitive, so quick to wrath, so retentive of petty grudges, that he must weigh with 12 nicety the proposed contents of his paper before they go to press. Many bickerings and jealousies arising in our town meetings can be either allayed or aggravated by the way they are treated by the local paper.

"In the early days of my experience there were three churches in Bristol. To avoid all semblance of partiality we had the habit of rotating the notes from these churches, in the column devoted to them, so that each, in turn, would have a space at the head of the column.

"The pastor of the Methodist church became dissatisfied with this way of doing things. He was pastor of the most prominent church in town, he said, and his church should have its notes at the head of the column...always. Further, he argued, the editor of the local paper was a Methodist, too---she should be interested, herself, in having the notes from her church stand first in the column.

"The editor demurring, he clinched his argument by warning that if the notes from his church were not placed first, in each edition of the paper, there would be no notes, from his church.

"I took the ground that, while it was true that the editor was connected with the Methodist church, it was equally true that the Enterprise was a non-sectarian paper, and was interested, not in any section or group of the town, but in the community as a whole. So...I could couldn't grant his request.

"There were no notes from the Methodist church in the paper for some time.

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"Thinking of what I said a moment ago about how thoroughly the weekly paper is read reminds me of what a man said to me once.

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"He has from time to time a small article to sell; whenever a supply comes in he places a 15 cent ad. in the paper.

""You know,' he said to me one day, 'I'm thinking I won't advertise any more. Got so I sort of dread the day the paper with my ad. comes out. Just as soon as the paper's off the press my 'phone starts ringing...people making inquiries about what I've got to sell. They make me an awful lot of trouble answering it.'

"And some of our country papers have a tremendous influence with their readers.

"One of our business men came into my office once to object to something I had mentioned or advocated--I don't remember now just what it was. But he felt a little stirred up about it, I recall.

""Do you know,' said he, 'you want to be careful what you advise people to do, in your paper. Why, if you should print in your paper that a certain man in this town ought to be murdered, and should repeat it a sufficient number of times, some one would be sure to do it.'

""Thank you,' I replied, 'that is the biggest compliment I ever received.'

"Our strongest papers are those which were established years ago, by men who were part and parcel of the people among whom the paper was to circulate, have been built up by the stout integrity of their founders, and are still a prized family possession of their descendants. They have always been edited by men who are of the same clay as their readers; they are products of the soil. The people understand those editors, and they feel the editors have a real sympathy with them. The strength of these editors comes from the ashes of the fathers. They belong. They have grown up among their readers, boys and men; they are old family friends.

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"I do not think a stranger could come into one of our New Hampshire towns, and get any great influence as editor of its paper , for a long time. Sincerity and a genuine interest in the town constitute the sources of an editor's influence; he must be the kind of man people can have confidence in. His influence doesn't depend so much on what he says.

"Subscribers are, on the whole, pretty loyal to their weekly papers, especially to the papers "of the soil". And yet an editor has to beware of offending them; he has to understand them, feel as they feel. The loss of subscribers, where they are numbered by hundreds, is serious; a dozen is a high per cent.

"But I do not think it is necessary to lose them--not if one is considerate of them. Let me give you an instance of what I mean.

"Forty years ago, in the area of an editor with which I have been in pretty close friendship, a man was mixed up in a shooting affair. It did not result fatally, yet it had a criminal intent. Involving, as it did, people of prominence, locally, the affair made a stir. Naturally, it was the duty of the paper to give its 15 subscribers the truth about it.

"But a relative of the offender, also a man of local importance, insisted that no mention of the affair be made in the local paper. Here was a chance for the editor to lose substantial subscribers.

"Having grown up with these people and being one with them, the editor sat down with this relative and talked it over with him. The editor explained that the affair would be talked over by the townspeople anyway, that it would be spread abroad in a mess of untruths, half-truths, and surmises, that it would be better for the offender's family themselves to have an accurate and truthful account given out by the paper, and it would discharge the duty of the editor as well.

"The family agreed that the editor was right, when it was presented to them in that way, and the editor and the relative composed, together, the real story for the / paper. It was

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published just as written out in that conference. Thus was the family influence saved for the paper.

"All but one...a woman. She, too, was related to the offender. She has never subscribed to the paper since...and that was forty years ago.

"I know of no business that offers greater diversity than a newspaper. We are called to the family afflicted with sickness and sorrow; we are also taken to the house of mirth. We are called on the telephone for information as to how long it takes to blanch or sterilize corn when you can it; we are asked for help to identify some bird on yonder twig. One has need of a gigantic 16 memory, tact, and patience; we are supposed to understand all mysteries, and all languages; to be able to decipher all penmanship. How would you answer a person, who should ask you, in the course of dictating in news, if you wrote 'sleight of hand'?

"A newspaper office is a bureau of general information--employment agency--even marriage arrangements are not beyond us. Listen to this which came to us from far spaces:

"I have here a copy of your Nice Enttering Littel Bright Clean paper of July 16, 19-- 300 miles from railroad.

Gentleman age 38 Never was maired

Can give good reference

wishes to Corespond with a young Lady of good address

No others pleas answer

will answer all letters & Confedensal

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Hedley City

Britch Columbia....Canada

put in the above add and oblage

Sirs you will find Inclosed \$1.60 I persume your charge is 10 cents per line But put it in a good place I Inclose \$2.00 I have meet many of the pepul from your part of the states and I Like them and ther ways

I am a sistzen of Idaho"

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"Or this:

"American Widor, Middle age, Wanting a American Widder, With no inComerance Middle Age."

"There have been given us unintended smiles to temper the unpleasantness of collecting our money:

"why doo you send me this Dun didant I col on you last Aug the 8 & pay for the paper & didnt I col & pay for the paper on the first day of June last I have the reseats & I go by them not by the tages in my paper for it ant corect & it had orto of ben sean to at the time I pade. & if you are not satesfide with what I hav pade for the paper you stop it for I dont like to bea dunnd thru the male I think I hav taken the paper ever senc it started but you can stop the paper. I am willing to pay for what I hav & can I hav taken the franklin pap for 9 years & never a Dun.

Mrs "

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and again one woman called in to complain that the items about her family were not worded as nicely as in other cases. A certain man wanted the items written about him to be written as they would be if we were writing about H P ,mentioning the name of a prominent town family. Here is a woman angry because we reject her items telling when some of the neighbors call on her; another person takes us to task for omitting his item informing the public that Mr. Smith has just got a new set of false teeth with which he is well pleased.

"We have, as you notice, a small stationery store in the room across the hall. One of our older residents came in one morning, when we were all busy, as usual, in search of a calendar 18 pad. He scrutinized our display, and the prices, ranging from one cent up.

"Finally he picked up one whose price looked harmless.

"A cent apiece..eh?"

"I agreed.

"An' 'tother one over there... same?"

"Yes.'

"M-m-m-m-m-m,' considering, 'I dunno....I dunno, now which one of 'em would fit best. This one seems a little mite too long, 'tother one a hair too wide, seems so. I dunno....I dunno.' "At length I suggested that he take one home and try it.

"Spose it don't fit, when I get it home?"

"Bring it back and change it, ther.'

"Oh, kin I do that?"

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"Certainly.'

"Well, now, I will...if I kin change it.'

"He trudged off home with one; in a little while he was back to exchange it.

"His wife had some Christmas folders left over from the year before but no envelopes to fit them. She came down to see if we had any of proper size. We looked over the entire stock but there were none of the correct size.

"Well,' I finally told her,' you can cut some of these over to make them the right size.' I showed her how to do it.

"Oh, thank you...thank you,' she exclaimed, overjoyed. 'I have some envelopes at home that I can make do now you've showed me how, and I won't have to buy any. Thank you...so much.'

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"An old gentleman--who has passed on now--wandered into the office one day, back when father was here. He was much interested in looking things over, and spied an unabridged dictionary lying on the desk.

"My!...that's a big book...now ain't it?'

"Yes,' father agreed , ' it is.' Then he went on to astound him.

"There's every word in the English language in that book... thousands and thousands of them.'

"My soul! I want to know,' marveled the ingenuous old soul.

"Yes, sir, every word a man can use, or wants to use is in that book.'



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"The old man gaped a minute.

"'But what sticks me,' he said,' is how you find 'em when you want t' use 'em.'

"So father explained to him all about the alphabetical arrangement...the indexing...how to look up words. Truly, the newspaper office is a public educator.

"This old gentleman, by the way, was the original of one of the characters in one of Fred Lewis Pattee's books.

"There were labor troubles strewn along my way. I had a foreman once who was rather eccentric. The girls in the office became more and more afraid of him, not because he called them 'blockheads' and other names, but because he would follow it up by throwing at them anything which came to hand. On publication days the atmosphere of the office was fairly electrified. More than once a shooting-stick came flying through the air to land 20 at their very feet.

"Shooting-stick? That is an iron bar about a foot long, shaped to drive home the wedges, or quoins, which lock the type in the forms.

"So I dismissed him on a Saturday night, fearing for the actual safety of the girls.

"He spent that night, and all day Sunday, on top of one of our highest hills, without food, fighting the matter out.

"Monday morning he came back to me, soaked with the rain which had fallen Sunday, to present to me the reasons why I, rather than he, was to blame. Then, failing to convince me by peaceful means, he threatened to sue me for not keeping him as long as he expected.

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"The tramp printer used to be a picturesque character. He's gone now, but he hung on to the country offices long after he had disappeared from the cities. He was often a godsend when he happened along in rush times.

"Seymour...at least that was the name he went by, here, although he had other names which I never knew...was one who came around on this beat for years. He was a nomadic sort, like them all, never staying for more than a few days or weeks, in the same place.

"I remember once when Seymour came to us most opportunely, and did faithful, expert work at the case for two whole weeks. Then, without warning, he asked for his pay, one morning. No kind or amount of persuasion could induce him to stay. He felt 'religion' coming on, he said, and he must go. The 'religion' was another attack of the wanderlust which never let him rest for long.

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"My present foreman, Mr. Thayer, who came to me from South Paris, Maine, more than twenty years ago, says he knew him there. Bethel, Maine; Berlin, N.H.; Canaan, N.H.; Milford, N.H., were points he visited with some regularity. He says [?] that Seymour had a very pronounced way of making you feel you ought to help him whenever he came in for a job. More and more he drifted into being principally tramp with his request for work coming to mean nothing more than a hand-out for him. In fact about the last of my knowing him, I was rather afraid of him, especially if he came to my house. I think he must have passed on by now; I haven't seen him for a long time.

"Mr. Thayer tells me of another tramp printer he knew, by name of "Gallishanks", however that may be spelled. But he never came to my office.

"These tramp printers were good for nothing else than setting type by hand.

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"The country newspaper office is, I presume, still the lurking place of trade slang which has long disappeared from the city offices. Some of them seem to be appropriate, if rather inelegant, as 'pukes', for medical advertisements.

"I never heard a man laugh harder, than did one of my foremen when the 'devil' came back with the 'coffin'. He had been sent to the storage room to get a 'coffin.' he had no idea what a 'coffin' was but he had been with the foreman long enough not to ask questions.

"He was gone a long time; finally he came back with a long, narrow box in which some ink rollers had arrived 22

"The foreman roared till the presses rocked.

"That's the only thing I could find that looked anything like a coffin t' me,' protested the poor 'devil', sheepishly. "'n' I looked all over the place.'

"Again the foreman went into spasms.

"I didn't know myself what a 'coffin' was; the term had never been in use in my office.

"A 'coffin', the foreman calmed down enough to explain at last, 'is the board fitted to carry the forms from the composing stone to the presses; that's what I wanted.'

"The 'printer's devil' was a more or less harmless young thing who came into the office to learn the printer's trade by sweeping out the office, running errands, picking over the 'hell-box' and is still a universal character in printing offices. The 'hell-box', with which the 'devil' is thus associated, receives broken type and slugs which are to be subjected to heat..to melt them over.

"Our office has also been the hiding place of 'type-lice'. Only 'freshmen' in the office ever saw these; they were a part of his--or her--initiation into the printing mysteries.

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'I remember when a young woman, dressed in a clean, crisp shirt waist, and other garments in accord, was shown the 'type-lice'. They were visible only in a wet galley, from which the ink had been washed with lye, and rinsed with water, the wedges having been loosened to allow the type to spread a trifle, to reveal the 'lice'.

"'Type-lice' infest this office,' the iniater told her, 'they hide in between the type, and are so tiny that you 23 have to look close and hard to see them.'

"She bent low over the loosened, [??] lye-water-ink soaked [?] galley.

"'See them?'

"'No'.

"'Look closer...get right down over, where you can see between the type. See 'em?'

"She bent, her nose almost on the type, when a sudden blow jumped the loosened type sharply together and whatever 'lice' there were between the type sprayed all over her in a fountain of inky [?] lye-water.

"[To?] learn to distinguish 'cap periods' was another indispensable requirement of the 'freshmen' help."

To understand the country editor one must understand the environment in which he lives, and moves, and has his being.

Country people are a peculiar folk. Their individual characteristics are pronounced; their rough angles are not smoothed [and?] polished by the friction of large masses of people jostling together. They are stubbornly themselves, like the granite hills--proud of it.

They are a plain-spoken people, almost brutally frank to one another--and to the editor of their newspaper--quick to suspect motives, easily offended, jealous of one another,

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retentive of grudges, even to the third and fourth generation. They wear their hearts on their sleeves--to one another, never to strangers. They take themselves and their doings seriously, magnify things of petty significance. They move in small orbits, are interested in small happenings--the doings of their neighbors around the [corner?] in Tannery Village, the East Neighborhood, Slab City.

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Of these people is the editor of the country newspaper part and parcel. He may be a superior part; he may have a broad culture; he may be of deep education, but of them he is, body and soul. He is a product of the same soil. He understands them as no outsider ever can. He feels with them, their prejudices have an echo in his own soul, albeit overlaid with better judgment. And for them he works and shapes his paper.

It is not an imitation, on a small scale, of a city paper. It is distinctly a country paper, intended for country people, as they are. It is purposed for home-staying folks. And how they stay!

Said a good woman, living on the outer edges of a small New Hampshire hamlet of a score of houses, besides the store, church, and schoolhouse:

"Land sakes! I don't go much of anywhere--stick right 'round home. I don't know nothing that's goin' on. I ain't been down to the village for, I don't know how long--more'n a year, anyway."

For the needs and wishes of these people the editor purveys. [?] Remarked an editor of a weekly paper in a 4,000 population town, within fifty miles of Boston:

"I don't try to compete with the big dailies, nor cover the ground they cover. My paper is distinctly to tell the local people local news, to do for them what the dailies cannot do. My paper has a different field, and in each town or area the paper there will be suited to the special needs of that area.

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"For state, national, foreign news, in the main, they can see the big dailies. These papers can afford to have their representatives at the center of events; they have expert reporters.

"All I could do, in covering this stuff would be to rehash what 25 they have said. I should feel silly doing it, and I should feel silly trying to give any original comment out of what I can personally know.

"My weekly paper is the paper that goes home--through the mail mostly. For many of the women it is the only paper read. The men...about 80% of then I should say...see one or another of the big dailies from Boston. But they do not take them home. They read them in the barber shop, the office, or store. But the weekly paper is the paper that covers the family. I have a practically complete coverage of all the families in my area."

The following [?] offerings to the local paper have been taken from a country editor's scrap book, compiled through many years. They were not all sent in to the same weekly paper, and it must not be thought that they were always published, at least not in this primitive form in which they were submitted by the writers ...country editors are too cultured [yfor?] that. But in them can be seen the sensitiveness, the jealousies, the interest in petty things, the quaintness, the plain-spokenness, of the country folk of a generation that is passing, and the more than simple education of a people largely gone. The pallid copy loses a lot of the suggestiveness of the handwriting, the letter forms, like the color from a dried flower. But one cannot read these without gaining a bit more appreciation of the country folk as their editor sees them.

Something which restores to a harried editor faith in the [intrinsic?] honor of country peoples:

26

"Am sorry to Say I shame that [?] hant paid you Before i have had lot of letters from you And i will Say you Are A perfict Gentleman i would of paid you Before But i hant had the

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money And so i have keep thinking i wood have it but i Any nearer the money then i was  
when i Begun i have Big Famly to suport i Cant pay my bills But i have Borried \$6 0 0  
Dolars with i will Send you And i Ask if you would Bee so kind As to send me recat in Full  
and stop the [?] As [1?] Ant Able to pay for It

Your truly

"

A brighter outlook for business:

"Gents

what will you Print me one dozen bills lik sample

Your "

Or the reverse:

"Dear Sir

Inclosed you will find an order for \$3.75 to pay for Conf. Minutes received. Will say that  
the next time you send me such a batch of minutes I shall return those I cannot sell. I dont  
intend to pay you or anybody else for a half dozen or more to look at.

Yours in Christ.

-----"

"Friend[?] you may stop sending me the paper when my subscription expires. I am within  
two months of my 83" birthday and no children to leave it to." 27 Whitmanesque. "Good  
Old New Hampshire is not to be forgotten if her hills are rough and steep She is the pride  
and Joy of the pleasure Seekers Of her Sister States Her Mountains high and Valleys low

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which make the landscape of our old Granit State That gave her the name The Switzland of America And well may she be proud Rocky clefs and Mountain Steep all look into the mirror at their feet which the beautiful warters of her lakes and rivers which the Sparkling springs and Dancin brooks make The Steamboat on the Lake The Railroad on the River bank Let the wether be wet or dry They make their regular trips They will leave you most enywhere From the lowest Valley To the Mountain top People come here for Summer To catch a Trout or Shute a Duck To kill a patridge a Moose A hair or a buck Twas high in the mountain God hung his Sign--man We read in the paper of our Sister States The death of Some Nobleman The standing of another Why he was born on that [?] old Farm On sutch a hill, in sutch a Town In New Hampshire"

Dear sir i send you the above, if you think it Worthy of print you may mark it for the Enterprise this is my first prehaps it Would read as a Poem better than Portry as you think best."

28

Fine writing from the far places:

"A noble man's the Handiwork of God.

Though dead, They speak to us as in the days gone by. To man's love heart, Thou hast brought nigh. Oh man of Great invention the sound of vioces still. Edison, we Hail Thee, Man of Great renown, with Honour. Not for pomp or Glory. Heir to His Kingdom, God's Handiworker, And round the Social Hearth. The viece of They, Though dead They speak. Come, like the viece or some sweet dream. Oh Great of our Great Our God, The [Ore?] Essential. Oh Wondrous Power on Earth and Heaven. We Hail Thee. Power of all. Who hast to Man such wonder's given, Oh Robe of Flesh, that sinks within the Dust from whence we came."

"That restless being that revels in change and contrast has been amply pleased the past few days with the variety of the week's weather. We have had hours of sunshine and of



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shadow; storms of snow and storms of rain with the suitable accompaniment of hail and sleet; days made cold by the crisp winds of the lingering winter and days warmed by the breath of approaching spring."

"Now is the sweetest season to revisit New Hampshire [?] and feel once more "Life's morning", but if deferred till August, we promise to open house, and heart and suffer neither pride, poverty or age to hinder us from being children once more."

"In looking over the Atlas the other night, we discovered that was not the only place on the map, and is not the largest R R Center of North America. It is not yet a seaport. Neither is the National Capitol located here. We will however wager a peck of beans we have the most costly thing of its kind in existence. We have seen earths largest R R Depots, which are located in Boston also the great Victoria bridge at Montreal. The [Hoosac?] Tunnel the sky scrapers of Chicago the new Marble State capitol of Minnesota and several other things of the giant world but we have yet to see the thing designed or created by man that cost in proportion to a building 7 x 14 ft which was recently built in the rear of our brick school house."

29

"FOR SALE-- My place in B , containing 35 acres, wood timber and pasture. Five acres tillage: (rocks, weeds and bushes). A few old hedgehog trimmed, natural fruit apple trees. Non-trellised, never bearing grape vines. Huge mass of conglomerated junk. Several ancient, dilapidated, antediluvian vehicles; must be unloaded with premises. For a quick sale, will throw in a view of Newfound Lake and White Mts. House, barn and other buildings included. Price decidedly unreasonable. Terms C.O.D. Reason for selling, too old and decrepit to carry on. For more particulars, inquire of any " native; then consult

-----.

EXPLANATION:

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Condemnation is easier than raise. I have condemned my place. If you say anything It will be good.

-. -. -----."

"For Sail

Sorrill maire eight years old."

"We never saw the like what our advertisement done in your paper before we got our paper our cows were sold & gone"

-----

"Mrs. H. F. B[?] is working out doing generil house work by the Ougher."

-----

Cards of thanks.

"I wish to thank all my friends who so kindly helped me in the sickness and death of my wife."

"We wish to express our thanks to all who assisted in our loss of a husband and father."

30

Items of Interest---to the writers:

"We have had so much rainy weather lately that the planting is not all done. We saw a Sabbath School Superintendent last Sunday start out as soon as the school was closed to look up some help for next days planting "

"Mrs. Ella M is still confined to the house of her late sickness."

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"Mrs. Jennie H is on the gain of her sickness."

"There will be this year many conjunctions and fewer oppositions than usual between batchelors and old maids."

"Mrs and Brother were in Sunday to see theair sister Who is expected to pass away at any ougher."

"Mrs. has got the pneumonia. Also a babey boy born Dec. 26th."

"Mr and Mrs of Boston and miss of North Sanbornton are recent guesses at "

"It is reported by Mrs that Mrs. Perkins is Crazy and that is an absoluie Falshood."

"We hear Mrs. Jed Smalley of East is dead and the rest of the family are sick with the same."

"Samuel Smith lost a nice horse last week ....stoppage."

Mrs has a corset lamb not three months old which weighs 30 lbs."

31

"The question if you meet any one is not how do you do but has your water stopped. Never was such a time known."

"The drouth is taking on a serious aspect in this section. George Palmer who lives on a hill near the village, is driving his stock over a mile to water. Another week of dryness will compell him to do the same thing for his home "

" Funeral services were held at the house on friday last at ten o'clock J.T. F was manager."

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" A very excellent program was rendered and everything went off in a very nice manner and every one home having enjoyed a very nice evening A large number attended and the affair was very financial."

Telling the editor:

"When I sined for the paper paid for the sane and shall not ever pay another sent and further more you need not bother youre self to send it any more as I shall not take them from the office any more."

"Dear Sir:-

Since sending my last communisation I rec your letter and have this to say in reply. I am perfectly willing to not send any more items for when an editir gets so narro minded (as this is the case with you) that he is unable to see only one side of a thing the sooner all relations are severed the better."

"Please Dont Send the paper ony more for i dont Want it."

"As I have look your paper over sevrell drifent Times I have not been able to fiend any West M atames I would write a few ltemas each week if you caired to have me as I suspose your rule is to give your paper one year free for writing the ltmass If you cair to have me Write [?]

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Please send me a line an Preeticlars. In regard when the ltmass must bee sent in to you to Print each week as I note your paper is Printed Thursdays I suspose the ltmass should Bee in By Tuesday each Week my address is

Mrs. "

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A school board member publishes his reports:

"Schools Closed June 29 After A term of ten weeks. No 6. was taught by Miss A L , making her seven Terms in this school. She is one of our best Teachers And the Schollers showed grate Improvement.

The exercises wear perfect the Parents showed grate Intrist in the School sixty two to visit the school the last day

No. 10 was taught by Miss Mary L the school was a good one the scholars mad good Improvements if thear is any fault it is with the Perance not with the Teacher."

Another educational report:

"District No. 1 This district has had 3 Terms of School of 9 weeks each Taught by Sara M one of the best of Teachers

She had 3 District united 1 in B.... 2 from A they ran just like Clock Work She did not have to oil up much either.

"Last year at this time, my book shows, I subscribed to your splendid paper for Miss Julia to be sent to It expires this month and I cannot renew it for her because, as you know, she expired too and I miss her keenly."

A postmaster fills out a return P.O. card, notifying the editor of a subscriber's refusal of his paper at the office, stating as

Reason: "The time is out and tha ant a gonter them out."

33

In Memoriam: "One has gone from midst our number One whose voice we loved to hear He now sleeps in deaths cold slumber Where no sorrow will he fear. He was kind, so fond

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and gentle That we loved him, ah to well; But a band of angels found him And they wooed him home with them And in robes of radiant glory They have clothed his youthful form And for gentle deeds of goodness He'll receive a starry crown. Could we gaze beyond heavens portals, To the regions of the blest, We should see sweet James asleeping Calmly on his Saviours breast. He's escaped the care and sorrow Of a sinful world like this; God hath lent, and he hath taken What he lent because twas best. Then, fond parents, cease thy weeping For the idol thou hast lost. Let hope whisper of the meting Thou mayst have when life is past"

34

[?] 34

"Daniel C [?] of Boston is spending his vacation with his wife. Mrs. C [?] is recuperating from an operation with her mother."

"Ned a little Dog belonging to [?] once a resident of Bristol past away in [?] on the morning of May 27 [?] after a few days of suffering with heart trouble caused by Old age, being nearly Sixteen years of age.

Past Away 1 Little Ted! shall we count him dead The unforgotten tis said never dies  
Though mound of earth in garden corner 'Neath the Apple tree shade shows where he lies.  
2 A faithful little friend for nearly sixteen years, Grateful for every kindness shown; And were there any faults to find, He never held those faults his own 3 His gratitude unflinching love  
His patience trust outdo who can? His courteous ways to those he loved, For Ned was of his race a gentleman.

4 Dear Ned I sometimes wondering muse If that thy days and being can be o'er Or whether for your ill used race [?] Some other planet may not be in Store. 8 Through love to him, the love I bare To all his kind took deeper root And pleading Dumb creation's rights [?] Shall be

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of dear Ned's life the fruit. 9 Yes as long as I can speak or pen can hold Gainst cruelty a line to trace, Little Ned shall live in evry line The noble benefactor of his race.

Pleas will you give this writing a space in your next Ishue if convenient; if any mistakes are seen pleas rectify.

[?]."

35

(1) "Mr. B

Why didnt you publish those lines I sent you about two weeks ago, in regards to my woman sickness

Do you charge any pay for publishing it,

Mr. S. D. H

(2) "Mr. B 's folks considers they are as worthy as any one else Mr. S.D.B Who has been on the sick list is now on the gain.

(3) "Mr. Editor.

In reply to your letter that you sent Mr. B last week I am much obliged to you for it.

But I would like to inform you that I have found items printed this week and last week And the people wasant any dangerios sick than I was. And printed almost the same way Mr. B wrote my sickness.

And at the time Mr. B sent you the advertisement I was dangerous sick And I understand the meaning of such things I am quite as respectably as Mrs. Q.... G of G

Mrs. S. D. B .

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"Notice

please Publish these Items as I send them in and. let nothing be left out. as I dont wish to Select. Items and have so many of them left out.

Yours truly "

36

"We do not get many such things as you have just been reading," said Miss Musgrove, "not now. That generation is passing and a younger generation is coming up, better educated. Education has permeated the rural areas tremendously in the last score of years. Schools are better, and children are responsible for a great deal of adult education by carrying home from their schools a good deal of what they learn there. No one appreciates the progress of education among our rural areas more than the editor of the country newspapers. It is something which presents itself to him every day.

"Just by way of illustrating that improvement I want you to see three essays, written by pupils in the third grade of our schools. [Taken?] together they make a fair average of the grade. These were written in a contest on the subject:

"How to Make Bristol a Prettier and More Attractive Town."

" The first is by keeping our streets clean, I mean by that never throwing old papers and peelings about. Secondly by planting vines and flowers in the back yards, this helps to cover up many unsightly places. Third by cleaning up the ruins of the hotel. And again by trying to close up the poolrooms, and by obeying the laws of Bristol, in this way we may become good citizens "

"To make the younger boys stop smoking and swearing. Put more garbage barrels around. Have some chairs beside the road for the old people to sit on when they get tired.



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To keep our own yards clean. To remember Sunday as a quiet day. Set out trees around the town. Set out trees around the town Have lower prices on things at the stores."

37

A third, typed by himself:

"In oder to have Bristol a more attractive place. We ought to move the common into the middle of the squear, so that anyone coming into the village would turn around it just like the silent policeman, and take the silent policeman outl Put the flag pole on the south end and put the stone that has the names of the men that were in the Civel War, next to the flag pole. Have seats go up as far as the middle and have the cannon next, have some more seats go up a ways. Have room enough for a drinking fountain and a band stand, and have band concerts.

In another way, we ought to have some men and womens toilets on the park. And have another hotel built where the old one bernt.

They ought to clear up the park. When anyone has a banna, instead of throwing the pealing in the street have some garbage cans around the street and have a man go around and empty them every week."

"The prospect of more and better writers through the progress of education naturally interests us editors. There are few columnists among rural people; it is only occasionally that we contact anyone who can help us out with special features. We run a column contributed by Mr. George Proctor, on out door topics; Our local conservation officer has given me some material from time to time. He is much too busy to devote more than scraps of his time to writing, however. Once I had a local humorist writing a column for the Enterprise whose work was so good that many people bought the paper for the sake of his feature. But people like these are rather rare with me. 38 38

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"In former days a newspaper office was often called a 'poor man's college'. There is a considerable list of names of those who received their start, at least, in the Enterprise office and later held high positions. They gained much of their education in spelling, composition, and punctuation by picking type.

"I mention Dr. Fred Lewis Pattee as one of these. He has reflected a little glory on the Enterprise office by the renown he has won as head professor of literature at Pennsylvania State College for 34 years. He has become an international authority in American literature, especially in literary criticism, and is the author of man many books, both novels, and critical works.

"Of his early experience's he wrote us, on the occasion of the Enterprise's sixtieth anniversary, last year:

"I began to work as 'printer's devil' December 19, 1879, and I worked until June 1883. During my first year it was my duty to build the fire in the morning and keep it going during the day, sweep up, wash up rollers, pick over the 'hell-box' and be useful generally.

"I was a crude specimen when I entered the office at the age of sixteen, and I spelled 'country style'. I really never had been schooled until I stood at a type-case and was compelled to put all-but-unreadable manuscript into perfect form, rightly spelled and rightly punctuated.

"I lived at my old home over on the farm in South Alexandria, two miles away. All that first winter it was my duty to get to the office at 6:30 in the morning and have the room warm when the hands came in. To do this I had to have my breakfast at 5:30 and on stormy mornings had to wallow through Bartlett's 39 39 Woods on unbroken roads at temperatures I hesitate to record. For this I received 50 cents a day and boarded myself. "I find by consulting the time book that I carefully kept, that during that first year at 50 cents a day I was never absent from the office a single working day.'

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"Mr. Wm. J. Randolph, from 1908 to 1936 Register of Deeds for Grafton County, was another 'pupil' of the 'poor man's college' at Bristol. Fe says of it, in part:

"The schooling which I received under the tutorship of Mr. Musgrove was of great value to me, for at that time I was taught the complete rudiments of typesetting, press work and newspaper work In great measure I owe my success to the late editor of the Enterprise, Mr. Musgrove, because he was painstaking and very patient and considerate to his young apprentices, and was determined we should make good if by rare fortune we had it in us to do so.'

"Mr. Randolph worked, subsequent to his experience in my father's office, in the Government Printing Office, in Washington; on the Lowell Daily Courier; he helped found the Sandwich Reporter, worked on the Plymouth Record, edited the Meredith News for four years, and operated a job printing office. 40 40

"Mr. Fred E. Ackerman, for 37 years postmaster at Bristol, and still one of the town's foremost citizens, was also one of the ' pupils ' of the Enterprise office. He began work as 'printer's devil' at the age of twenty, at 50 cents a day, standard wage for the first year. For his second year he received 75 cents a day; the third year, \$1.10; he finally reached the high salary of \$12.00 per week, approximately the same wage as was being paid at that time in Concord.

"Mr. Ackerman boarded at the Hotel Bristol, Otis K. Bucklin, proprietor. The cost of board was [\$5.00?] per week for room and board. Mr. Bucklin made a discount for absence on week ends; he kept no record, but depended on the boarder to inform him of the amount due.

"The newspaper game is boundless in its scope and [possibilities?]. The vision of these possibilities is well-nigh staggering, for one's strength and the time between issues are so limited.

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"One of the things I should like to do is cover more rural life...life on the farms. I wish I could get out among the 41 farmers, make more personal contacts with them, talk with them about life and conditions on the farm, and construct from these bits of conversation stories of the real rural life.

"Another of my visions is more contacts with people about the village. News--local news--quantities of news, about one [another?] are the standby of the country paper. I feel that if I could get about more in the village--if I could listen in where people are talking--I would get a lot of suggestions as to where news might possibly lie. The 'nose for news' is not always the gift of people who gather news for me, and I always need news.

"Again, I think the paper should, each week, have some vital message for its readers--some worth while suggestions of constructive things to do for the area we cover. There are many things which ought to be done, which could and probably would be done, if people thought about them, the reasons for doing them, and were convinced of their practicability. There are matters religious, educational, moral--all of which ought to come in for discussion in our columns.

"Perhaps of much less importance, yet something I would like to do, is the presenting [?] of both sides of national issues. Those are not so much the field of the country papers as of the big dailies. But there are many of our subscribers for whom our paper is the only one they see, and I feel that some attention should be given to such issues.

"But to do that with any justice I should have to give to them much study--more than I have any time for. We do carry a Washington letter, and one from our state capital, and those have to 42 suffice.

Nature lore is very attractive to our readers--movements of birds in various seasons, flowers, animals, fish--especially fish. Located as we are on Newfound Lake, which

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abounds in game fish, and being in the midst of a region of trout brooks, and in easy automobile reach of Lake Winnepesaukee, everybody fishes. It is the big sport.

"Consequently I used to carry a very popular column on fish--as complete a record as I could get of the daily catches of fish, with their weights, number, size, kind, made in our area. It attracted much attention. But...there again came in the limitation of time and strength.

"Even the children set some store by the Enterprise. One Fourth of July, in a recent year, Bristol held a field day, [with?] the usual sports. One little fellow was victor in his class of [range?], and felt his laurels, naturally.

"I suppose he felt quite sure that his name would appear in the paper among the lists of victors, for he came down to the office the next day to ask me to print an extra paper, in the press run, so that he could have a copy all for himself.

"And so we touch the vital interests of all classes of people in our community, as editors, receiving from them perhaps more than we give them, but giving them all that is in us to give."

As a conclusion to Miss Musgrove's story the fact should be mentioned that in the year 1936 her paper was awarded the Silver Trophy offered by the New Hampshire Weekly Publishers' Association. This Trophy is given each year to the paper exhibiting the most outstanding accomplishment. The Enterprise was awarded this Trophy in the first year it was offered for a splendid piece of reportorial work on the flood of that March. # The report was written in diary form--the day by day happenings in the flood area of the Bristol region. Three times a day the editor travelled around, getting the height of the water in the Pemigewasset River, the Smith River, Newfound Lake and other points, noting attendant circumstances-- every all matters matter or interest. The physical labor, to say nothing of the writing, was tremendous..

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Miss Musgrove's modesty in withholding this honor from her story is further evidenced by the way in which she tried to disparage her own ability as a reporter. Her daily notes were rapidly scribbled on separate small sheets of paper intended' she said, to be decently written out later in some smoother general story form, but that, owing to lack of time they were finally thrown into her paper in the crude form of daily personal experiences. Probably that was the ideal way of telling the story; at least, the Publishers' Association seemed to think so, and our modern country editors are good judges of reporting.